



**Alberta
Cattle
Commission**

GRASS routes

The Alberta Cattle Producer Monthly Update

January 2000

Call us at (403) 275-4400



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Producers Set Course for 2000

Cattle producer delegates from across the province debated 84 policy resolutions at the Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) 25th annual general meeting (AGM) in Edmonton early December.

Jim Turner of Cochrane (left photo) was reaffirmed as ACC chairman while Greg Conn of Innisfail was elected as the new vice-chairman. Bob Christie of Stavely returns as finance chairman. As well, several new board members and committee chairmen were elected.

Some of the key policy decisions were:

- The ACC will work to **improve trade opportunities in foreign markets.**
- The ACC will look for ways to **improve two-way trade with the U.S. while protecting the health status of the Canadian cattle herd.**
- The ACC will **advocate for industry development funds** rather than direct support to producers.

- The ACC will work to **ensure provincial regulations concerning intensive livestock operations and cow/calf operations are fair and reasonable.**
- The ACC will respond to the draft regulations concerning **provincial grazing leases.**
- The ACC will lobby government to **protect the interests of landowners adjacent to abandoned railway lines that are being converted into recreational trails.**
- The ACC will lobby the provincial government to **reduce petrochemical emissions.**
- The ACC will conduct a cost/benefit analysis of Livestock Inspection Services to **determine how to best meet the inspection requirements of the industry.**
- The ACC will work to **improve beef quality and food safety.**
- The ACC will lobby government to **increase fines for trespassing on private land.**

*Congratulations
Joyce Noga
of Medicine Hat
and
James Gilbertson
of Coronation.
Each received a
\$500 4-H scholar-
ship from the ACC
towards their post
secondary educa-
tion. Well done
and good luck to
both our winners!*

Looking to the Future After Trade Decision

The Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) check-off made the successful defence of the U.S. trade actions possible and ensured continued access to Canada's largest market.

"We're very pleased with the decision, says ACC Chairman Jim Turner. "Our defence strategy proved to be effective as the decision was a 5-1 vote in our favor."

The ACC is the largest funder of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) which led the charge on the legal front. Total cost of the defense is almost \$5.5 million with Alberta's portion nearly \$3 million. Turner believes the U.S. investigations reinforce the need for a strong, well-funded organization like the ACC to defend the industry when necessary.

The U.S. producer group that led the trade investigations has decided not to appeal the countervail duty decision but has filed an intent to appeal the anti-dumping injury ruling. The CCA is optimistic that the appeal will be dropped but is prepared in the event it proceeds.



Environment

Rancher Wins Stewardship Award

Roy Audet of Last Sands Ranch, southeast of Milk River, Alberta is the year 2000 recipient of the Alberta Cattle Commission Environmental Stewardship Award (ESA).

Audet was selected because of his commitment to managing the native range, riparian areas and tame forage under his care in a sustainable manner.

The ranch was settled at the turn of the century by Audet's grandfather and managed as a mixed cattle and grain operation.

Feeling that this part of moisture-poor southeast Alberta was never meant to be farmed, Audet has taken farmland out of production and seeded it back to grass to better manage the sensitive ecosystem. This has not only prevented soil erosion, but has helped stop the spread of alkali in the soil.

Today the ranch has approximately 140 head of cattle on almost 5,500 acres of deeded and leased land.



Audet feels a whole-farm approach to grass management is especially important in the dry Milk River area. Last year (1998), Audet saw only 3.5 inches of moisture for the year. So any steps taken to minimize erosion and maximize soil stability are essential. As a result, Audet practices rotational grazing and winter feeding.

The Milk River is the life-blood of the many ranches and farms in southeast Alberta, so Audet is an ardent protector of the water system. Cattle access to stream banks is managed along some sensitive areas of the river and Roy has been encouraging brush and tree growth through selective fencing and caging.

These progressive attitudes have led Audet to become very involved with conservation minded projects in his area such as becoming a founding member of the Milk River Ranchers Association, which promotes water conservation and pasture management, and supporting the Riparian Habitat Management Program, better known as Cows and Fish. Audet was also part of a local canoe club set up

to help smooth interactions between boaters and local landowners by developing public access points to the river at several bridge crossings.

Last Sands Ranch has undergone many changes in the past and the Audet family feels change will continue into the future. And it's a future that will include an environmental stewardship approach to sustaining a way of life.

Representatives from conservation and agriculture formed the judging committee and examined the stewardship goals and activities of the nominees including accomplishments in land management, water quality, wildlife, animal welfare and leadership activities in the community related to stewardship.

Who Will Win Next Year?

The Environmental Stewardship Award (ESA) was created to publicly recognize cattle producers who are doing an excellent job of protecting the environment from which they make their living.

If you know of someone who would be an excellent ambassador for the industry, why not nominate them for the 2001 ESA?

Deadline for nominations is July 1, 2000. Nomination forms are available from the ACC office at (403) 275-4400.

The winner will be announced at the 2000 ACC annual general meeting in Calgary, December 5, 2000.

Cattle Producer Communications

The Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) recently upgrading its website. You'll now find Alberta cattle industry news, market information and the latest on ACC activities as well as links to others cattle sites updated on a regular basis. You can find us at:

www.cattle.ca/acc

The ACC is also on the radio. Listen for **Cattle Country** with Jim Fisher on most rural stations every Wednesday during the noon hour for the latest ACC news.

As well, the ACC still has market information available via telephone:

Slaughter Information (403) 274-4340

Feeder Information (403) 274-4345



Industry News

Endangered Species Plan Announced

The Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) has congratulated Federal Environment Minister David Anderson for taking a big step toward protecting endangered species by responding to the concerns of land owners about legislation that would have pitted land owners' natural concern for the environment against their ability to make a living.

Anderson recently released an update on his Plan for Protecting Species at Risk. The plan recognizes the importance of cooperation with land owners in preserving critical habitat for endangered species, supports stewardship and incentives for protecting habitat, and includes compensation for land owners, land users, and other stakeholders when habitat protection results in loss of income.

"We will be watching closely to make sure Government does not back away from what was promised," says Jim Turner, Alberta Cattle Commission chairman and co-chair of the CCA environment and animal care committee.

"Minister Anderson has promised that criminal action for the destruction of an endangered species or its habitat will only be used as a last resort when all other efforts have failed, and he specifically stated that his made-in Canada approach will not be like the adversarial, litigious approach in the U.S."

"If the federal government follows through with what it has promised, I think Canada will have legislation that we can all live with - land owners, conservationists, and most importantly, endangered species."

Beef Education Association Coordinators attend consumer oriented trade shows and fairs throughout the province to promote beef in smaller markets. We appreciate their hard work.



left to right: **Jeanie Culligan**, Duchess; **Karilyn Marshall**, Bowden; **Debbie Kerik**, Flatbush; **Carol Wilson**, Killam; **Barbara Bastedo**, Calgary; **Elaine Deeg**, ACC Education Coordinator missing: **Elizabeth Stroeve**, Picture Butte; **Garry Gurtler**, North Star

Cattle On Feed Report Published

The first Canadian Cattle on Feed report is now available. This provides a new marketing tool for producers and will help give a better feel for placement patterns and front-end supply of market ready cattle.

The report covers finishing feedlots with a one-time capacity of 1,000 head or more. So far only Alberta and Saskatchewan feedlots are being surveyed as they feed 80 per cent of the cattle fed in Canada. Other provinces may be added in the future.

Canfax has been contracted by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to develop the report. It is available on the Canfax website www.cattle.ca/canfax.

ACC Directors and National Representatives

The following is a list of the ACC zone directors and directors at large that together form the ACC board. The ACC also elects directors to the Canadian Cattlemen's Association (CCA) responsible for national lobbying, and members to the Beef Information Centre (B.I.C.) committee responsible for national promotion.

ACC Board of Directors:

Zone Director:

Tom Livingston	zone one
Cattle Industry Chairman	
Bob Christie	zone two
ACC Finance Chairman	
Michael Bird	zone three
Beef Promotion Chairman	
Craig Horner	zone four
Public Affairs Chairman	
Darcy Davis	zone five
Government Affairs Chairman	
Dave Solverson	zone six
Producer Liaison Chairman	
Murray Kerik	zone seven
Technical Chairman	
Vern Batke	zone eight
Cec Jardine	zone nine
Alberta Agricultural Fourm	

Directors at Large:

Greg Conn	zone five
ACC Vice-Chairman	
Arno Doerksen	zone one
Canada Beef Export Federation	
Livestock Identification Services	
Jim Turner	zone three
ACC Chairman	

CCA Directors:

Greg Conn	zone five
Darcy Davis	zone five
Arno Doerksen	zone one
Dale Greig	zone seven
Elgar Grinde	zone six
Chuck Groeneveld	zone three
Hugh Lynch-Staunton	WSGA
Jim Turner	zone three

B.I.C. Committee Members:

Michael Bird	zone three
Kevin Boon	zone five
Bob Christie	zone two
Jeanie Culligan	zone one
Elgar Grinde	zone six
Bruce Stewart-Smith	zone three

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING RESOLUTIONS

The following resolutions were generated at 39 country meetings held throughout the province during late October and early November.

A resolutions committee comprised of Alberta Cattle Commission (ACC) delegates organized the resolutions for the ACC's annual meeting held at the beginning of December. Each resolution was presented at the annual meeting, where it was debated and voted on by the

ACC delegates.

The carried and tabled resolutions are printed below. Limited space prevents us from printing the defeated and redundant resolutions. A complete list of resolutions is available from the ACC office. If you want further information about any one of the following resolutions, please contact your local ACC delegate (see list on pages 6-9).

Executive

1. Be it resolved the ACC not entrench voting eligibility to those 18 and over, and that full membership in the ACC including the right to vote continue to be open to all who pay the check-off.
2. Be it resolved the ACC Plan be amended so that the number of directors-at-large be increased from three to five people.
3. Be it resolved the ACC bring all industry players together to attempt to limit multiple brandings.
4. Be it resolved the ACC lobby Livestock Identification Services to refund the \$1.00 brand inspection fee on cattle imported from Montana.
5. Be it resolved the ACC do an in-depth cost/benefit analysis on the relevance of Livestock Identification Services in meeting industry requirements, with the study to be completed before the implementation of the Canadian Cattle Identification Program.
6. Be it resolved the ACC heed their constituency and mandate and show some leadership in limiting what "big oil" refers to as a "perceived problem" - namely the effects of industry-generated hydrocarbons and related compounds on cattle.
7. Be it resolved the ACC lobby the provincial government to re-examine and lower toxin and pollutant levels in the petrochemical industry and then enforce those reduced levels.
8. Be it resolved the ACC provide assistance to the provincial

government to make changes to forage insurance to better reflect different areas.

9. Be it resolved the ACC Board engage in constructive discussion over the next six months with the Alberta Cattle Feeders' Association and the Western Stock Growers' Association with the purpose of developing a better working relationship.

Producer Liaison

1. Be it resolved the ACC annual report for the year 2000 be proof-read to assure that the page numbers be easily read.
2. Be it resolved the ACC web page be equipped with an updating service.

Public Affairs

1. Be it resolved the ACC become involved with and support producers in water management issues involving wildlife.
2. Be it resolved the ACC participate in the framework for the water management planning process.

Technical

1. Be it resolved the ACC investigate the rendering systems that handle diseased or contaminated carcasses to ensure that proper controls are in place so that contaminated product does not get back into the system.
2. Be it resolved there must be strict regulation of the processing of animal by-products used in feeds and/or supplements.

3. Be it resolved the ACC examine the role of the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association in drug distribution.
4. Be it resolved the ACC consider monetary support for the Breton Plots.

Government Affairs

1. Be it resolved the ACC, in cooperation with other stakeholder groups, ask the Government of Alberta to enact an all-inclusive right to farm bill.
2. Be it resolved the ACC lobby the provincial and federal governments to legislate the attachment of a label listing the ingredients to all bagged or packaged seed and that dealers of bulk seed must supply a written ingredients label at time of sale.
3. Be it resolved that in the event that cow/calf operations are not exempted from the regulatory options for intensive livestock operations that the ACC lobby the government for the following changes: threshold levels for beef cattle be increased to 500 cow/calf pairs, confinement period to be extended to 180 days, notification process to surrounding landowners for expansion of existing operations only becomes necessary when the numbers exceed 1,000 head, and both the 50 and 100 year floodplain must be clearly defined by the Province of Alberta for each intensive livestock operation and livestock operation located near a river or stream.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING RESOLUTIONS

4. Be it resolved the ACC continue to lobby the federal and provincial governments for the return of an effective strychnine-based gopher poison.
5. Be it resolved the ACC actively lobby the Alberta government to reconcile the discrepancy between the Thurber Report and Alberta's submission to the U.S. Department of Commerce.
6. Be it resolved the ACC work more actively with all stakeholders to assist in the development of the regulations being developed under Bill 31.
7. Be it resolved compensation at fair market value be paid to producers for losses caused by predators and ungulates.
8. Be it resolved the ACC lobby the provincial government to increase fines for trespassing on private land.
9. Be it resolved the ACC lobby government to require seismic companies to close their inline holes after completion of work with either cement or other technologies to within two feet of the surface.
10. Be it resolved the ACC lobby government that railways be required to fence all right of ways where needed.
11. Be it resolved the ACC lobby government to have municipal governments be required to have agreement by all adjacent landowners before a permit is issued for development of designated trail use.
12. Be it resolved the ACC lobby the federal government to allow adjacent landholders to arbitrate abandoned railway right-of-ways into their titles.
13. Be it resolved the ACC lobby government to make TrailNet and railways responsible for fences, fires, garbage, weeds and other nuisances on abandoned rail lines.

14. Be it resolved the ACC lobby government to ensure right of access for landowners affected by abandoned rail lines.
15. Be it resolved the ACC urge the government of Alberta and the CABIDF committee to initiate a study of the feasibility of a school of veterinary medicine in Alberta.
16. Be it resolved the ACC lobby the government to make the 'Green Zone' exempt from Bill 31.
17. Be it resolved that in lieu of the matching government contributions to NISA, which the cattle producers of Alberta have voluntarily foregone, the ACC request the provincial and federal governments contribute a like amount of money on an ongoing basis to an industry development fund for the benefit of Alberta producers.

Beef Promotion

1. Be it resolved the ACC design a display encouraging the safe handling of beef during its preparation and cooking in the home environment, to be used at fairs and shows where large numbers of consumers congregate.
2. Be it resolved the ACC consider providing information that the use of growth promotants in beef production is safe and provides healthy products for consumers.

Canadian Cattlemen's Association

1. Be it resolved the Canadian Cattlemen's Association explore any opportunities that may be available in the political sphere with reference to becoming proactive in protecting our industry from ongoing protectionist trade actions instigated by the United States.
2. Be it resolved the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency look into the feasibility of brisket tags for identification.

3. Be it resolved the purchaser of the identification tag have the right to access all information derived from said tag.
4. Be it resolved the ACC Board have a representative on the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency board.
5. Be it resolved the current information regarding the Canadian Cattle Identification Program be made available to all producers on an ongoing basis during the year 2000.
6. Be it resolved that until such time as an effective and workable proposal that protects producer confidentiality is put before the ACC convention and approved, the Canadian Cattle Identification Agency will not be permitted to divulge herd of origin information to Livestock Identification Services.
7. Be it resolved that Canada maintain its Bluetongue and Anaplasmosis status.
8. Be it resolved the ACC lobby the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to recognize the health status of cattle from U.S. states included in the Canadian Restricted Feeder Cattle Import Program so that they can be imported on a year round basis.
9. Be it resolved the ACC lobby both the federal and provincial governments and lend support to industry associated organizations, such as the Canada Beef Export Federation, to achieve the goal of having the funds from tariffs levied against imported products turned over to the national organization of the industry being harmed, in this case the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, to be used for the benefit of all cattle producers.

Budget

1. Be it resolved the budget for the 2000/2001 fiscal year be approved as presented.

ALBERTA CATTLE COMMISSION DELEGATES

Zone 1:

Counties 2, 4, 8;
M.D.s 1, 14;
that area of Special
Area No. 2 that lies
south of the Red
Deer River



Janet Cordes
Rolling Hills,
(403) 964-2103



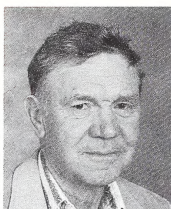
Jeanie Culligan
Duchess,
(403) 378-4552



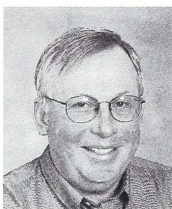
Arno Doerksen
Gem,
(403) 641-2498
director at large



Stan Krause
Jenner,
898-2207



Tom Livingston
Duchess, (403) 378-4701
cattle industry
committee chairman



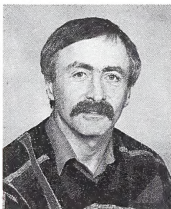
Gary McMorris
Milo,
(403) 599-2148



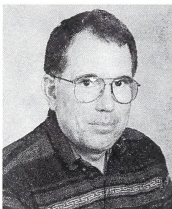
Merle Wyatt
Arrowwood,
(403) 534-2277

Zone 2:

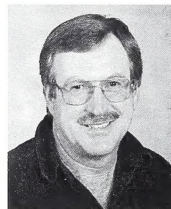
Counties 5, 26;
M.D.s 6, 9, 26, 66;
I.D.s 4, 5, 6;
Municipality of
Crowsnest Pass



Bob Christie
Stavely,
(403) 549-2141
ACC finance chairman



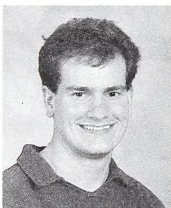
Marvin Conrad
Stirling,
(403) 733-3603



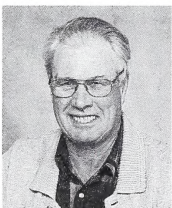
Jack de Boer
Monarch,
(403) 824-3407



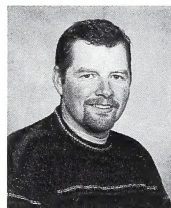
Weldon Thomson
Raymond,
(403) 752-4551



Scott Van't Land
Coalhurst,
(403) 381-9307



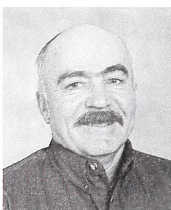
Len Vogelaar
Pincher Creek,
(403) 627-5848



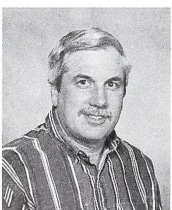
Les Wall
Coaldale,
(403) 345-6565

Zone 3:

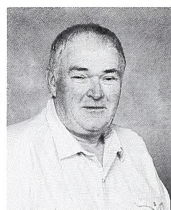
Counties 16, 17;
M.D.s 8, 31, 44;
I.D. 9



Bruce Bamford
Calgary,
(403) 256-5674



Michael Bird
Blackie, (403) 684-3446
beef promotion
committee chairman



Charles Groeneveld
High River,
(403) 938-7843



Randy Kaiser
Hussar,
(403) 787-2440

ALBERTA CATTLE COMMISSION DELEGATES

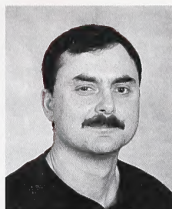


Zone 4:

Counties 18, 29;
M.D.s 34, 52, 61;
that area of Special
Area No. 2 that lies
north of the Red Deer
River, Special Area
No. 3, Special Area
No. 4



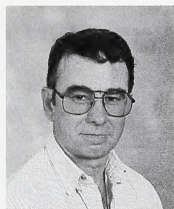
Murray Morrison
Okotoks,
(403) 558-2288



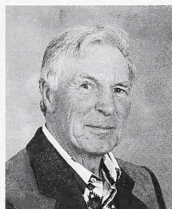
Bruce Stewart-Smith
Calgary,
(403) 239-0324



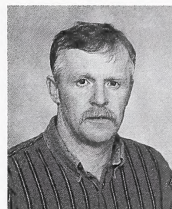
Jim Turner
Cochrane,
(403) 932-5278
ACC chairman



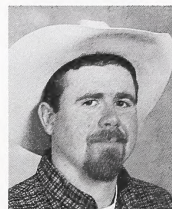
Ron Bullick
Coronation,
(403) 578-2192



Harold Carter
Kinsella,
(780) 386-2205



Craig Horner
Hanna, (403) 566-2494
public affairs
committee chairman

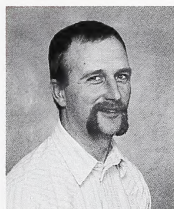


Gene Rawe
Strome,
(780) 376-2360

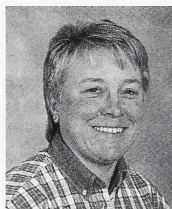


Zone 5:

Counties 6, 14, 23;
M.D.s 7, 47, 48, 99



Glen Rosenau
Cereal,
(403) 326-2010



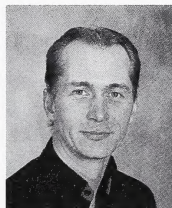
Marj Veno
Hanna,
(403) 854-2487



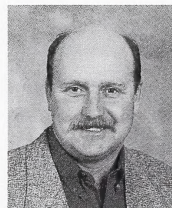
Carol Wilson
Killam,
(780) 385-2202



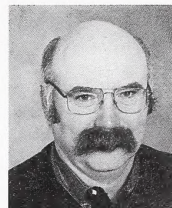
Millie Boake
Rocky Mountain House,
(403) 845-5468



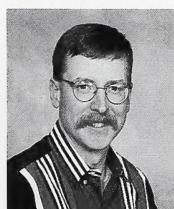
Kevin Boon
Della,
(403) 364-2253



Greg Conn
Innisfail,
(403) 227-6656
ACC vice-chairman



Don Curtice
Innisfail,
(403) 227-2511



Darcy Davis
Acme, (403) 546-2647
government affairs
committee chairman



Barry Haner
Red Willow,
(403) 742-4384

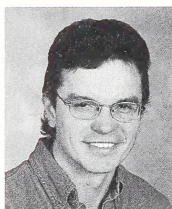


Ron Hopper
Rimbey,
(403) 843-3436

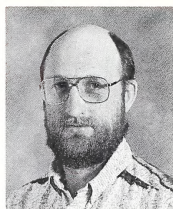
ALBERTA CATTLE COMMISSION DELEGATES

Zone 6:

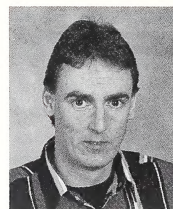
Counties 3, 9, 10,
20, 22, 25, 31;
I.D. 13;
M.D. 77,
City of Edmonton



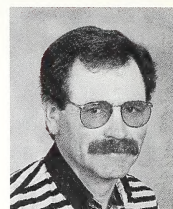
Roy Eckert
New Sarepta,
(780) 941-2487



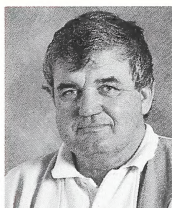
Elgar Grinde
Holden,
(780) 688-2123



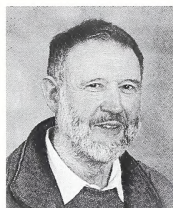
Curtis Henkelmann
Leduc,
(780) 986-3786



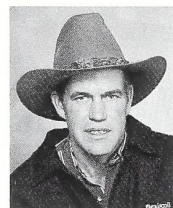
Allan Minchau
Millet,
(780) 387-5349



Don Mosicki
Warburg,
(780) 848-7778



John Prentice
Calmar,
(780) 985-3611



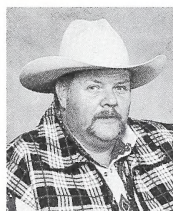
Dave Solverson
Camrose, (780) 672-7141
producer liaison
committee chairman

Zone 7:

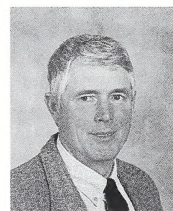
Counties 7, 11,
12, 28;
M.D.s 15, 17, 90,
92, 94, 124;
I.D. No. 12



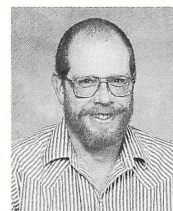
Lee Davis
Niton Junction,
(780) 795-2203



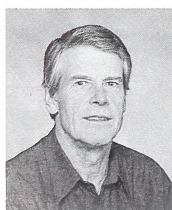
Joe Dobyanski
Westlock,
(780) 954-2165



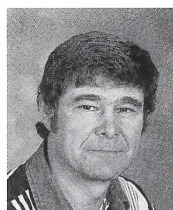
Dale Greig
Barrhead,
(780) 674-4246



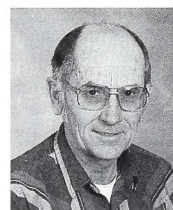
Murray Kerik
Flatbush,
(780) 681-2244
zone director



David Pasay
Morinville,
(780) 939-2472



Dale Schaffrick
Barrhead,
(780) 785-2779



Ed Yoder
Smith,
(780) 829-3787

Zone 8:

Counties 13, 19, 21,
24, 27, 30,
Lakeland;
M.D. 87,
Municipality of
Wood Buffalo,
I.D. 24



Vern Batke
Bonnyville,
(780) 826-5776
zone director



Miles Belsheim
Marwayne,
(780) 847-2236

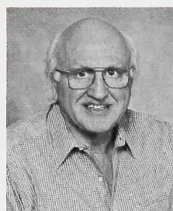


Larry Cherniwchan
Bellis,
(780) 636-2208

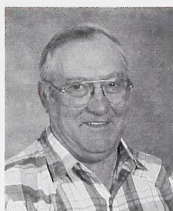


Shelley Dyck
St. Lina,
(780) 726-2223

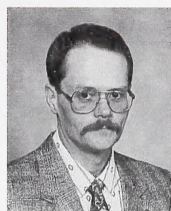
ALBERTA CATTLE COMMISSION DELEGATES



Guy Fontaine
Edmonton,
(780) 428-0707



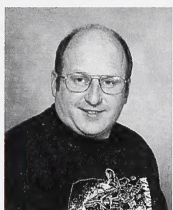
Raymond Konieczny
Mannville,
(780) 763-2304



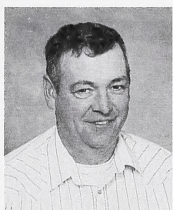
Lyndon Mansell
Innisfree,
(780) 592-2262

Zone 9:

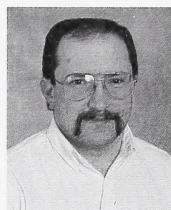
County 1;
M.D.s 16, 19, 20,
21, 22, 23, 125,
130, 131, 133,
135, 136



Phil Fazikos
Deadwood,
(780) 836-2299



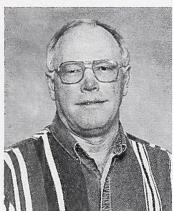
Dennis Gellings
Bear Canyon,
(780) 595-2143



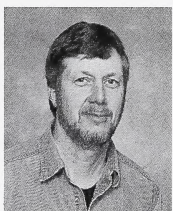
Greg Griffin
Bluesky,
(780) 596-2050



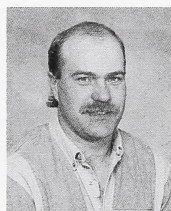
Garry Gurtler
North Star,
(780) 836-2125



Cec Jardine
Valleyview,
(780) 524-3507
zone director



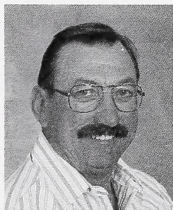
Robert MacAlister
Wembley,
(780) 766-2741



AJ Wamsteeker
Woking,
(780) 774-2038

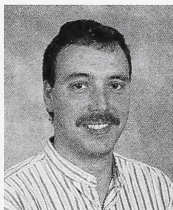
Producer Association Delegates:

*Alberta Canada All
Breeds Association*



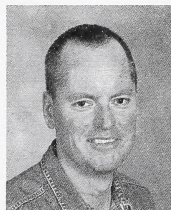
Lyle Taylor
Alberta Canada All Breeds
Barrhead,
(780) 785-3422

*Alberta Cattle
Feeders' Association*



Leighton Kolk
Alberta Cattle Feeders'
Iron Springs,
(403) 738-4596

*Alberta Milk Produc-
ers' Association*



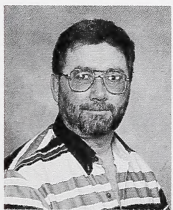
John Vander Heyden Jr.
Alberta Cattle Feeders'
Picture Butte,
(403) 732-4222

*Feeder Associations
of Alberta*

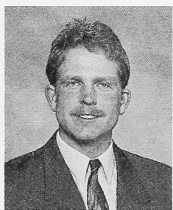


Lorrie Jespersen
Alberta Milk Producers'
Barrhead,
(780) 785-2121

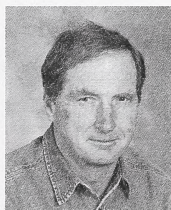
*Western Stock
Growers' Association*



Rodney Murray
Feeder Associations
Picture Butte,
(403) 732-4643



Neal Gilchrist
Western Stock Growers'
Milk River,
(403) 344-2162



Hugh Lynch-Staunton
Western Stock Growers'
Lundbreck,
(403) 628-2420



National Scene

Canada/China WTO Pact Aids Exporters

Now that Canada has signed an agreement approving China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), prospects for increased beef sales have improved according to Ted Haney, president of the Canada Beef Export Federation (CBEF).

"There are short and long term benefits," explains Haney. "In the short term, China's tariff on beef will drop from 40 to 20 per cent. This means a significant reduction in the landed costs of Canadian beef which translates into lower retail and foodservice prices. As we place a lower cost product inside China, we more effectively compete against domestically produced beef, which is a real factor in that country."

China will be subjected to further reductions in its tariff at the next round of WTO talks.

The 20 per cent tariff is considered a starting point, observes Haney. The agreement serves to open more ports rather than using just Hong Kong,

which has been the case in the past.

Haney feels China "is a long term series of question marks".

This year China will import 10,000 tonnes of Canadian beef. The reduced tariff could open the way to possibly double that amount. If there were no tariffs, that amount could double again. By comparison, Japan is by far the largest offshore customer of Canadian beef. That country will

import approximately one million tonnes this year.

While sales to China are minor now, exporters are looking at the long term potential of such a large market. Haney points out that any major growth in Chinese purchases of Canadian beef will depend on the growth of the country's middle class and their ability to afford the high quality product.

Computer Grading Advancements

Canada's beef industry is a step closer to implementing the Computer Vision System (CVS) for grading beef. A commercial agreement has been signed and Research Management Systems of Calgary has received exclusive Canadian rights to the system. This opens the way for regulatory approval in Canada. The CVS system takes a digital picture of the beef carcass and determines the grade and yield.

"I think this system will really aid in consistently and objectively assessing the quality and yield of beef carcasses," says Arno Doerksen, Alberta Cattle Commission board member and chairman of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association beef quality and grading committee. He hopes this new advancement in grading will soon be approved by the Canadian Food

Inspection Agency.

CVS has been tested in Canada at Cargill Foods plant in High River. Several systems are being introduced in the United States.

Doerksen feels there's a good future for the product. "I think that with the emergence of branded products and tighter production specifications that are coming, the system will aid in optimizing information on quality and yield. We're hoping the value of the system will be widely recognized and used in the industry.

The CVS unit was developed by scientists from the Lacombe Research Station in cooperation and with the support of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and the Canadian Meat Council.

National ID Toll-Free Service

The Canadian Cattle Identification Agency has introduced a toll-free telephone service to enable cattle producers who are interested in the program to call for more information. The number is **1-877-909-2333**.

The purpose of the program is to establish individual cattle identification for animal health and food safety traceback. Anyone who hasn't received the information is encouraged to call the toll-free line to have a package forwarded. The target implementation date for the Canadian Cattle Identification Program is December 31, 2000.

The Alberta Cattle Commission 216, 6715 - 8th St. N.E. Calgary, AB T2E 7H7
Phone: (403) 275-4400, Fax: (403) 274-0007 Mail Registration Number 116432